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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a historical overview of research supporting whole language, discusses how the research is applied in kindergarten and first grade, and suggests new directions for whole language. The first part of the paper situates the whole language movement historically and offers a perspective of past research that supports the whole language movement. It also discusses educational movements of the recent past, major theorists, and the reading/writing connection. The second part of the paper discusses current application of whole language theory and research in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, and considers research into practice, whole language teaching strategies, the reading/writing connection, and assessment issues. The third part assesses the needs in the field and suggests new directions for whole language in the future. In addition, viewpoints regarding whole language versus traditional reading and writing instruction, assessment, and the use of computers are summarized in the third part of the paper. Contains 3 annotations and 34 references after the first part, 3 annotations and 32 references after the second part, and 4 annotations and 24 references after the third part of the paper. (RS)

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THE USE OF WHOLE LANGUAGE WITH CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE

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TOPIC PROPOSAL

The purpose of this paper will be three-fold:

1. To establish a historical overview and perspective of past research that supports the whole language movement.

2. To discuss how the research is applied into current practice with children in kindergarten and first grade.

2. To assess the needs in the field and to suggest new directions for whole language in the future.

The Use of Whole Language With Children in Kindergarten and First Grade

Chapter One: Historical Overview and Perspective

Introduction:

Whole language is an evolving grass-roots movement among teachers that is rooted in scientific research. It integrates research from the fields of psychology, philosophy, linguistics and education. It is humanistic, child-centered and focused on meaningful experiences (Goodman K., 1989; Goodman Y., 1989). As Kenneth Goodman (1989, p. 208) says, "Whole language starts with the premise that the whole is the sum of its parts." Listening, speaking, reading and writing are not isolated for instruction but are integrated. (Goodman, K. 1989). The philosophy of whole language is not new. It has been around for a long time in different guises (Cambourne, 1988; Heald-Taylor, 1989).

What is reading? Although a singular model that completely describes the reading process does not exist, three conceptualizations of reading have been given a significant amount of attention by reading authorities. These views are called top-down, bottom-up and interactive. All three models share two similarities. They all have a reader and a written text to read ((Heilman, Blair and Ripley, 1986).

Authorities who consider reading to be a top-down process focus on the reader. Readers bring prior knowledge based on past

experiences to predict meaning as they read. This predicting is referred to as hypothesis testing. Readers sample the written text to test assumptions. (Heilman et al. 1986). In the top down model, processing proceeds from whole to part. This is consistent with the whole language approaches to reading instruction (Lipson and Wixon, 1991).

The bottom-up concept is another view of what happens during the reading process. In this view, the essential element is the written text rather than what the reader brings to the text. Words and word parts are processed in order, the words synthesized, and meaning is revealed from this processing of reading (Heilman. Blair and Rupley, 1990). In the bottom-up model, processing proceeds from part to whole. This model is consistent with skills-based approaches to reading instruction.

The third conceptualization of the reading process, interactive processing, is a combination of the top-down and bottom-up views. Readers use both their experiential/conceptual backgrounds and text features to comprehend the meaning of the text (Heilman, et al. 1990).

Most authorities agree that there are some basic features of reading: comprehension should be the product of reading; reading ability is closely related to oral language ability; reading is interacting with printed language; reading is directly affected by an individual's interaction with his environment (Smith, 1978). Smith states, "Understanding, or comprehension, is the

basis of reading and learning to read. What is the point of any activity if there is no understanding?" (p.6).

Educational Movements in the Recent Past:

A technology of reading instruction was developed between 1920 and 1960. The philosophy of skills-based reading programs is rooted in the learning theories of the behavioral psychologists (Goodman, K., 1991; Heald-Taylor., 1989). The behaviorists believed that knowledge is acquired by internalizing it from the environment. They viewed reading as a collection of surface skills and bits of information (Kamii 1991). It was a mechanistic, teacher-directed view of learning. The behavioral psychologists supported the principle that learning is best achieved by simplifying what has to be learned through fragmentation. Spelling, grammar and phonics were isolated for instruction (Cambourne, 1988). It was assumed that children learn simple concepts first and complex concepts later through sub-skills that can be easily sequenced and measured. In the skills-based approach, skill learning and mastery is the goal, not the meaning of the texts (Heald-Taylor, 1989).

The behavioral psychologists believed that children would benefit if the scientific/technology view of learning was incorporated into tightly constructed materials to guide the teachers step by step (Goodman, K., 1989). Basal texts, organized around controlled vocabulary and sequenced sub-skills, were introduced. Behavioral psychology is used to develop texts

which emphasize phonics and sound-syllable relationships with individual words. Rules are developed to determine how many words should be introduced on a page, and how frequently pre-taught vocabulary should be repeated. Texts are graded and dependent on prior ones (Goodman, K., 1986).

Programs produced by this technology have included workbooks, activity kits, guidelines, manuals, record sheets and computer-based instructional sequences. Such programs are based on the assumption that children will synthesize the facts and sub-skills into the whole of reading. They do not provide a context or purpose for children (Smith, 1983).

Standardized tests, designed to assess learning, have been used extensively in recent years and are at the focus of the skills-technology view of reading instruction. These published tests provide standardized methods of administration, scoring and interpretation. Most existing standardized tests treat reading as a collection of facts and sub-skills that can be readily learned, easily sequenced and measured. Educators came to rely increasingly on standardized tests to make decisions about the child, the school and the school system. Tests decide the child's promotion, ability tracks, admission to special programs and the effectiveness of teachers. Standardized tests label learners if they do not perform well. New means of evaluating learners are being called for, because standardized tests do not reflect modern research and current definitions of reading (Goodman, K., 1986; Lipson and Wilson, 1991).

Researchers and educators were actively involved in a developing child-study movement before the standardized testing movement became so powerful. Teachers discovered that they can learn more about the needs of children by careful "kid-watching" than by formal testing. Informal evaluations are made during ongoing classroom activities while teachers watch children play, read, write, plan and discuss. Kid-watching includes teacher/child conferences concerning reading and writing, anecdotal records, reading miscue inventories and writing observation forms (Goodman, K., 1986).

Earlier movements in the United States such as language experience, literature-based instruction and individualized reading influenced the whole language movement. The language experience approach to reading instruction was well developed prior to the 1960's. In 1943, Dorris Lee and Lillian Lamoreaux wrote "Learning to Read Through Experience." At that time, the language experience approach became part of reading instruction. Children were involved in a wide range of experiences including trips. Experiences in all content areas and language were integrated for instructional purposes (Goodman, Y., 1989). Teachers used the children's own words and experiences to write group charts and stories which were read and shared. Throughout the years, most early childhood educators have included this approach in their reading programs. (Heilman et al., 1990). The language experience approach is based on the concept that reading is most meaningful to a child when the instructional materials

are expressed in his language and rooted in his personal experiences (Hall, 1980).

In addition to the language experience approach to reading, literature-based reading programs were popular before the 1960's. These programs immersed children in reading a wide variety of real books. In the literature-based view, reading is defined as the ability to read all types of literature with ability, understanding and enjoyment. Dewey's psychological approach to literature encourages children to respond personally and directly to what they read. Reading is not considered the acquisition of a set of isolated sub-skills in the literature based approach to reading (Norton, 1992).

Individualized reading programs, proposed by William C. Olson in the early 1950's, emphasized meeting the needs and interests of the individual child. The philosophy of individualized reading rejects the use of basal readers and ability groupings. Individualized reading is an approach based on the concepts of self-pacing of reading and self-selection of reading materials. Individual student conferences with the teacher and record keeping by both student and teacher are involved in the program. Olson believed that children grow best when surrounded by a large variety of books from which to choose (Heilman et al., 1986). Jeanette Veatch (1985), an advocate of choice in reading, argued that reading instruction focus on trade books for children. She is credited for popularizing individualized reading in the United States (Goodman, Y., 1989).

According to Wendy Roberts, C.W. Post librarian, the Education Index and the Current Index to Journals in Education did not consistently list the term whole language as a heading until the June 1984 issue. Information about whole language was listed under the term language experience prior to that time.

In a whole language classroom children learn naturally. They are immersed in language and literature. Demonstrations of language are provided. All the children are actively involved in meaningful activities. An atmosphere of expectancy is created in which the children are treated as readers and writers. They are encouraged to take responsibility for engaging in language activities that match their developmental level. Children's approximations and risk taking are natural behaviors of acquiring language (Fisher, 1991). Frank Smith (1983) states that one learns to read by reading and to write by writing.

The focus of the whole language curriculum is on the learner, not one the content. The teacher is seen as a co-learner and facilitator. Together, teacher and learners set goals. Teachers organize a literate environment that builds on the background experiences of the learners. They seek to comprehend the cultures of the learners (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Major Theorists:

Major theorists from the fields of philosophy, psychology, linguistics and education influenced the whole language movement (Goodman, Y., 1989). This research base is integrated with the

strong humanistic traditions of holistic movements that go back as far as the seventeenth century (Goodman, K., 1989).

John Amos Comenius, the most prominent educator of the seventeenth century, made the first picture book for children which became the most popular textbook in Europe. Important characteristics in his concern for learning and children tie in with the beliefs of whole language advocates (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Comenius believed that children can discover new information by being introduced to what is familiar to them and by being able to manipulate concrete objects. Children need to enjoy their learning experiences in order to learn. Even in the seventeenth century, Comenius believed that only meaningful learning belongs in the school. In addition, he believed that children should begin their learning in school in their native language. Comenius was reacting to the fact that Latin was used as the language of instruction in schools (Goodman, Y., 1989; Comenius, 1657; Bardeen, 1887).

John Dewey, a major twentieth century philosopher, provided a positive view of human learners. Dewey believed that instruction should start where the learner is. Learners are viewed as eager to learn and capable of doing so. The view is child centered in that it accepts the responsibility to help every child gain maximum growth. Differences in children's needs and cultures are valued (Goodman, K., 1989). Dewey explored the significance of the integration of language with all other areas of the curriculum. Dewey thought of classrooms as laboratories

in which language was included as one of the tools. He was concerned that children's learning needs be reality based rather than abstract and removed from experience. Children should actively participate in their own learning by solving problems that are relevant to them. Dewey viewed play as an important source of intellectual development. (Goodman, Y., 1989; Harp, 1991).

Psychologist Jean Piaget also influenced the whole language movement by contributing theories of developmental learning from the 1940's until the 1970's. For whole-language educators, the significance of Piaget's work lies in constructivism, his theory about how children acquire knowledge. He showed how children acquire knowledge by constructing it from the inside in interaction with the environment. Children are active participants in trying to understand and organize their world. They do not wait for knowledge to be transmitted to them from the environment, but learn through their own activity with objects and phenomena. Children acquire language, both written and oral in the same way. Piaget considered children producers of knowledge who attempt to make sense of their world (Goodman, Y., 1989; Kami, 1991).

Lev. S. Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, redefined the teacher's role by exploring the relationship between the learner and the influences of the social context. He viewed teachers as mediators who facilitate learners' transactions. Teachers are not seen as controlling learning, but as co-learners with the

children. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development emphasized the importance of the role teachers play in children's learning, although children eventually take ownership of their own learning. Vygotsky considered the important social aspects of peers and play. He believed that play is itself a major source of development. People internalize language from social interactions. Whole language classrooms are communities of learners (Goodman, K., 1989; Goodman Y., 1989).

In the 1970's, Michael Halliday, a systems linguist, explored the functional aspects of language. In a study of his son's oral development in England, Halliday observed the key functions of speech a child uses. (Heald-Taylor, 1989). He described how children create language through a process of social engagement (Newman, 1985). Experiences and insights can be shared through language. Halliday (1975) called language learning "learning how to mean" because people learn the social meanings language represents in the process of learning language. He concluded that at the same time learners are using language they are learning language, learning through language and learning about language. The whole language curriculum is a dual curriculum, based on this conclusion. Every activity creates an opportunity for both cognitive and linguistic development (Goodman, K,. 1989; Goodman, Y., 1989).

In addition to theorists from philosophy, psychology and linguistics, educators from the field of reading have influenced the whole-language movement. Some of the beginnings of the whole

language movement can be traced to the work of Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith as early as the 1960's (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Smith and K. Goodman (1971) pointed out that psycholinguistic analysis confirmed what educators have known intuitively for years - that the key factors of reading lie in the child and his interaction with adults who provide information rather than in the kind of reading materials used. Literature that incorporates natural language functioning is most compatible with such interaction. Studies of how children learn the rules of adult language have shown that children have an innate predisposition for discovering the rules of language. Experiments have shown that beginning readers look for and make use of orthographic, syntactic, and semantic redundancy. They need to examine a wide range of literature to generate hypotheses about the regularities underlying it. According to the insights provided by psycholinguistics, a set of instructional materials in the form of textbook rules is not the type of information a child requires.

Kenneth Goodman, a psycholinguist, provided a view of the reading process. In 1968, he presented The Goodman Model of Reading, published in his book, "The Psycholinguistic Nature of the Reading Process." The purpose of Goodman's book was to describe the relationship between thought and language as it applies to the act of reading. The Goodman Model of Reading described reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game." The reader uses graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues at the same

time to construct meanings from the print. Beginning with the prediction of what the information is about and knowledge of how language works, the reader selectively samples from the print and using all three cuing systems constructs meaning (Raines and Canaday, 1990). This is a top-down view of reading described earlier.

Oral reading provides a way to examine children's use of the language systems that cue meaning. Kenneth Goodman examined children's oral reading and found that all readers make mistakes. Goodman called these mistakes miscues because his analysis showed that each deviation from the text made by a reader could be explained on the basis of that reader's use of one or more of the available cue systems. The reader uses graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues in reading. By monitoring the sense of what he was reading, the reader was able to self-correct or not as required (Newman, 1986). One of the most significant findings of miscue research focuses on the self-correction patterns of skilled and less skilled readers. Skilled readers tend to self-correct errors that are contextually unacceptable and to leave uncorrected errors that are contextually acceptable. On the other hand, less-skilled readers are as likely to correct acceptable as unacceptable errors. The major advantage of miscue analysis over traditional analyses of oral reading errors is that it recognizes that the quality of errors indicates the child's quality of strategies used to process text (Lipson and Wixson, 1991). Educators realized that texts were easy or hard for

individual readers to the extent that they were predictable. Beginning readers found predictable books easier to read. Teachers collected predictable books to facilitate the development of their children's reading. They communicated this need for predictable books to publishers who produced more predictable books (Goodman, K., 1989).

Frank Smith (1988) regards comprehension as relating relevant aspects of the world around us to the knowledge we already have in our heads. He refers to prior knowledge stored in the brain that enables us to make sense of the print when we read. He considers long term memory our source of understanding the world. Smith states that we have most of our knowledge of the world and most of our knowledge of language in our heads at age five or six, before we arrive at school. He believes that the rest of our knowledge is gained mainly by filling in the details. Smith notes that children learn many things including speaking and much of language without being aware of learning. He further states that we are usually aware that we do not understand something when some knowledge is personally important to us. Smith believes that the basis of comprehension is prediction (Smith 1988). Smith states that to help children become proficient language users, it is the teacher's role to find out what children do and help them do it (Watson, 1989).

John Dewey's concepts to reading and literature were applied by Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1976) in her research on reading instruction. She was the first to describe reading as a

transaction between the reader and the text. Readers were given the rights to their own meanings (Goodman, Y. 1989).

Emergent Literacy:

Whole language educators and sociolinguists study young children's emergent literacy in the natural or social contexts in which it occurs. (Raines and Canady, 1990). Marie Clay of New Zealand studied emergent reading behavior in the 1960's. Her research indicated that children read with greater ease when the texts they were given retained the qualities of the child's natural, oral language. The texts that had literary quality and were predictable, were easier for the children to read. Clay's research showed that over-reliance on the use of phonics retards reading growth (Heald-Taylor, 1989).

Dolores Durkin's (1965) longitudinal study of pre-school readers concluded that young children are capable of reading naturally without instruction from adults in their lives. In order for natural reading to happen, the environment has to be stimulating, literate and secure.

New Zealand, influenced by John Dewey, adopted a holistic education policy, including shared book experience, that had a lasting influence on the whole language movement (Goodman, Y., 1989). In the early 1970's Donald Holdaway and his colleagues in the Department of Education were aware that the traditional model of teaching reading was not meeting the needs of rural Maori children and children of Polynesian immigrants from the Pacific Islands. To meet this challenge, Holdaway developed teaching

procedures known as "shared books experience," that were integrated with the existing language experience approach. This natural learning strategy was developed for these immigrant children with diverse backgrounds and language (Holdaway, 1982).

Holdaway (1982) analyzed natural, developmental learning conditions. His studies focused on children who were reading and writing when they entered school at five. These children learned to read without formal instruction. They were familiar with quality literature and a wide variety of favorite books which were read and re-read to them. Holdaway described how a child began self-motivated reading-like behavior when he became familiar with a book. The child repeated the story until a semantic completeness was achieved and a deep understanding of story meaning was displayed. Holdaway further stated that the reading-like behavior was self-corrected and sustained allowing the child to gain confidence in his ability to control his own reading. A gradual transition from reading-like behavior to reading behavior occurred.

Based on his research, Holdaway applied the important aspects of the bedtime story cycle to classroom beginning reading programs. Thus, he developed the concept of the "shared book experience." Big books with enlarged texts were used to provide the same impact and level of participation when there was a group of young children rather than one. Favorite chants, poems and songs were provided so the children could participate in unison responses and feel actively involved in literacy learning.

Holdaway's work was influenced by the work of Marie Clay, Jeanette Veatch and Sylvia Ashton-Warner. (Holdaway, 1982).

Midkiff-Brunda studied the Literacy Center at the Longfellow School in Cambridge Massachusetts. She found that each child participated at his own developmental level in the "shared book experience." Each child took responsibility for his own learning in order to become an independent learner (Fisher, 1990).

Whole language teachers build on young children's print awareness. Children in a literate society are surrounded by print on cereal boxes, doors, etc. Research by Yetta Goodman (1980) on American pre-schoolers indicated that children are aware of print before they come to school. Children learn that print is meaningful, functional and communicative. Hiebert (1981) studied three, four and five year old children's knowledge of purposes in reading and found that the children all showed a sensitivity to the differences between print and drawings (Lipson and Wixson, 1991).

The Reading/Writing Connection:

For many years, educators assumed that writing strategies should be based on the prerequisite learning of writing sub-skills. In the traditional model of writing, the sub-skills of handwriting, phonics, spelling and grammar are pre-taught. It is the assumption that composition writing will benefit by this instruction (Heald-Taylor, 1986). Whole language educators reject the traditional model of writing (Goodman, K., 1986).

Research into emergent literacy indicates that reading and writing emerge simultaneously (Lipson and Wixson, 1991). Reading and writing are processes that have a common ground. Readers and writers both use previous knowledge about a topic, about our language system and about the alphabetic writing system (Butler and Turbill, 1984).

Kenneth Goodman (1986) states that phonics instruction does not produce meaningful language. It reduces writing to letters that can be coded as sounds and sounds to letters. These can be blended to produce writing. Goodman further asserts that direct phonics instruction rejects modern research concerning the development of writing.

Goodman (1986) notes that the alphabet principle is discovered by children when they learn to write. They become aware of the relationship between letter patterns and sound patterns. Children search for rules as they do in all language learning. That search leads to invented spelling (Goodman, K., 1986). Charles Read (1971) discovered that children invented spelling on their own. Children begin representing the sounds they hear in oral language. A remarkable sensitivity to actual sound or speech was observed (Goodman K., 1989). Children search for standard spellings as they read and gradually move toward conventional spelling as they write (Goodman, K., 1986).

During the first half of this century, Alvina Burrows asserted that young children should be given the opportunity to express themselves in their own voices, writing about their own

experiences. In the 1970's, Burrows's work was supported by the research of Donald Graves (1972-1986) into the teaching of writing (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Donald Graves and Virginia Stuart (1985) conducted a two year extensive study of the writings of sixteen children. Their results showed that children write more and demonstrate better writing when they are encouraged to use their own developmental spelling and when they are given the opportunity to take control of topics. The children in the group studied, learned to revise their writing and to help each other in revision. Graves and Stuart discovered that every child in the study had behavioral characteristics in the writing process that were applicable to that child alone. Graves and Stuart concluded children need a waiting, responsive type of teaching (Harp, 1991).

Whole language advocates welcomed a focus on research writing. Donald Graves and his colleague Lucy McCormick Calkins provided extensive data documenting the writing process (Heald-Taylor 1989). Calkins (1986) states that process writing emphasizes idea production, writing, revising, editing and publishing. Calkins asserts that "the writing classroom must become a learning community, and everyone in it must be both a teacher and a student" (p.10). Calkin's research will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Two.

Teacher Support Groups:

The history of whole language demonstrates that many teachers have found the need to communicate with colleagues who share their discontent with traditional education. Their common belief is that teachers and learners must be responsible for decision making in their own classrooms. In the late 1970's, whole language teacher-support groups emerged. Yetta Goodman asserts that originally these small groups were located in Arizona, Missouri, California, Manitoba and Nova Scotia. Today, there are more than one hundred such groups. In February, 1988, these groups were organized as a confederation of whole language support groups, the Whole Language Umbrella, at a conference in Winnipeg (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Concluding Remarks:

For the past fifty years, some elements of holistic learning have been included in language programs. The language experience approach, quality literature used for instruction, activity centers, dramatic presentations and role playing were all incorporated into instruction. Until the 1980's, language programs were eclectic and included a heavy emphasis on skill activities, phonics and controlled basal readers. As research in the 1970's and 1980's was conducted there was a shift away from eclectic language in favor of a whole language view (Heald-Taylor 1989).

Dorothy J. Watson (1989) speaks of the integrative nature of whole language:

> Whole language is a point of view that language is inherently integrative, not disintegrative. It follows that language is learned and should be taught with all its systems intact. That is, all the systems of language - semantics, syntax, and graphophonemics (call it phonics if you must) - are maintained and supported by pragmatics (language in natural use) and must not be torn apart if language is to be learned naturally. Pragmatics includes the situational context in which language is used as well as the learner's prior knowledge activated in that situational context (p. 133).

Chapter Two will discuss the current application of whole language theory and research in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. The importance of teachers' understanding of reading and writing and how they relate to the development of literacy will become apparent.

Annotated References

Goodman, Y.M. (1989). Roots of the whole language movement. The Elementary School Journal. 90, 115-127.

This article discusses the history of the whole language movement. It goes back to the sixteenth century to explore the writings of Amos Comenius. Beginning with John Dewey, Goodman presents the views of major theorists from the fields of philosophy, psychology, linguistics and education and their influences on the whole language movement. This article describes earlier educational movements in the United States and their impact on whole language. Holistic views of education from New Zealand are mentioned. Goodman concludes by saying that science and humanism will continue to affect whole language views.

Harp, B. (1991). The whole language movement. In B. Harp (Ed.). Assessment and Evaluation in Whole Language Programs. (pp. 1-16). Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon.

The purpose of this article is to define and illustrate whole language for those readers who are not familiar with the whole language movement. Harp presents examples and explanations of whole language classroom instruction that is holistic, meaning-focused, and child-centered. He explains the characteristics of whole language instruction as a total literacy immersion program. The article

concludes whith an examination of the philosophical/research base of whole language.

Smith, F. and Goodman, K.S. (1971). On the psycho-linguistic method of teaching reading. The Elementary School Journal. 71, 177-181.

This article deals with the concerns of Smith and Goodman regarding the threat of the development of "psycho-linguistic materials" to education. They point out that the value of psycholinguistics lies in the insights it provides into the reading process and the process of learning to read. They state that a child appears to need to be exposed to a wide range of interesting and comprehensible literature so he can detect the significant elements of written language. They conclude that a textbook series or kit is the antithesis of psycholinguistic research.

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Chapter Two: The Current State of the Art

Introduction:

The picture of whole language has gained depth from viewing its historical context. Whole language teachers act on the basis of an integrated theory that is consistent with scientific research. The consistencies of practice identified in whole language classrooms come from this underlying theory (Goodman, K., 1989). There is considerable variability in whole language classrooms. Each one differs from all the others in the way theory is realized in practice (Edelsky, Atwerger and Flores, 1991). In part, the diversity of practice comes about because teachers have the opportunity to make their own understandings. Differences in whole language classrooms are expected as a result of teachers' responsiveness to the special individual and cultural needs displayed by the children (Holdaway, 1991).

Don Holdaway (1991) states that whole language classrooms cannot be described by any stereotype of methodology. They are creative, imaginative and varied environments shaped by insights about development and learning. The diversity of practice occurs because whole language theory does not prescribe a uniform set of practices.

Kenneth Goodman (1989) asserts that current research relating to language and literacy can be described as multidisciplinary. Significant research is being done in the

field of linguistics, psychology, enthnography, artificial intelligence and education. According to Goodman (1989), there is not a sufficient amount of interdisciplinary research. The result is that teachers and practitioners are integrating new information into practice. The whole language movement is so dynamic that a diversity of innovative practice based on sound scientific theory, is rapidly moving ahead of research. Whole language teachers do not wait for research findings to lead the way.

Goodman further states that an international literature is developing to support new ideas in whole language. It involves teachers writing for their colleagues. Canadians, Britons, Americans, Australians are sharing whole language insights.

Currently kindergarten and first grade teachers have available to them an abundance of literature on whole language theory, research and practice. This literature can be found in professional reading and education journals. The entire issue of the November Elementary School Journal, was dedicated to the whole language movement. In the December 1991 issue of Pre-K Today, several articles on whole language were featured. The Virginia English Bulletin, published by the Virginia Association of Teachers of English, devoted its Spring 1991 issue to Whole Language in the English Classroom. Warren Self (1991) points out that in this issue, many teachers who have developed whole language approaches share ideas, strategies, insights and words

of encouragement. They have changed as teachers, and they remember how difficult it was for them to change.

Zarillo (1989) notes the current popularity of literature-based reading programs. In California, the recently adopted English-Language Arts Framework (1987) has made a literature-based curriculum a policy mandate. Many articles on literature-based reading have been published in professional journals in the field of reading.

Research into Practice:

Many kindergarten and first grade teachers who view themselves as child-centered and have created a hands-on active learning environment find whole language compatible with their beliefs of child growth and development. As teachers learn more about emergent literacy, they design activities to perpetuate the natural literacy acquisition and development process established by the child before he comes to school. Whole language teachers are continually re-evaluating their current classrooms and curricula, based on their research findings. The term whole language may be new to early childhood teachers, but the concept of teaching the whole so that experiences are meaningful to the children, is not (Raines and Canady, 1990).

Kenneth Goodman (1986) asserts that the casual observer may not be aware of the organization underlying the whole language classroom. The children are involved in planning and managing their own learning. The teacher and children together make long-

range plans that provide a general framework, and short-range plans that include explicit details. It is the view of language learning, teaching and curriculum that makes a whole language classroom.

A literate environment is created in a whole language classroom. The classroom is immersed in an abundance of print. There are directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, books, magazines, packages, posters, phone books and T.V. Guides. Objects in the environment are labeled appropriately. Many whole language classrooms have mailboxes, a newsstand, and writing centers complete with paper and writing tools. Experience charts dictated by the children are displayed on bulletin boards (Goodman, K., 1986).

Whole Language Strategies:

According to Gail Heald-Taylor (1989), a whole language strategy is a language situation that is student focused, process-oriented and integrates many language processes. These include listening, speaking, reading, writing, drama, interpretation through the arts, thinking and problem solving. Many whole language strategies are not new. Early childhood teachers have been using some of these strategies for years. For example, teachers are using whole language when their language activities are organized thematically; when children dictate personal stories that are read by the teacher to the student; when children participate in choral reading; when children listen

to quality literature read aloud; and when children dramatize stories. The more current whole language strategies include writing process, shared reading and literature-based individualized reading.

Thematic Units:

When early childhood teachers organize the whole or a large part of their language activities around topics or themes, they are implementing a whole language strategy. Natural integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing occurs through science units, literature units, social studies units or units that link all three, as well as music, art or physical education. A thematic unit provides a focal point for both cognitive development and use of language (Goodman, K., 1986, Heald-Taylor, 1991).

Edelsky, Altwerger and Flores (1991) describe colorful scenes from actual whole language classrooms. In one New Mexico kindergarten and first grade resource room, the children are studying the supermarket. This is an example of a learner-focused classroom. The teacher's plan included a study within the community while the children chose the supermarket as the topic to study. The class took repeated trips to the store and became aware of the functions of print.

The entire classroom environment has been transformed into a supermarket. The various departments (meat, produce, dairy, post office) are marked by labels as well as the items found on each shelf. In the produce department, next to the scale, there are

student-made signs with pictures of food and prices per pound written underneath. The room is immersed in meaningful, appropriate print.

Edelsky et al. (1991) point out that the realism in the supermarket was created by great attention to detail. There is a large poster entitled "Plans" and a reference book about the supermarket. Everything in the room was written by children, made by children and owned by children. Objects on the shelves were either brought from home or made by the students. The toy cash register is filled with play money and student-made money. Children are busily reading labels, filling their carts with products, and counting out change at the registers. Each day children sign-up for different roles so they experience all aspects of the social structure. The activity resembles life in a real supermarket and includes the speaking, reading, writing, computing and problem solving that takes place there. The children's' language development in this classroom exceeded everyone's expectations.

Edelsky et al. (1991) describe another whole language classroom. The children in one kindergarten class, spontaneously, with no preparation, decided to do an opera after hearing their teacher, Chris Boyd, read-aloud one of James Marshall's stories about two hippopotamuses, George and Martha. The teacher quickly parceled out the parts including George and Martha, the wind, the balloon, the grass, etc. The children sang invented tunes and the opera was over in about one minute.

Then the opera was repeated with the other children in the lead roles.

Chris Boyd provided information about opera by playing tapes, talking about the varibus art forms involved in an opera, and singing all the voices of a given story herself.

In this classroom, drama happens in the same way: in response to the request of a child; and with performances immediately repeated so that the roles can be repeated by all interested participants. The groundwork had to be thoroughly prepared by the teacher before such spontaneous role playing could appear.

Chris Boyd's beliefs about language and language learning are reflected in her planning for all curriculum areas. From the beginning of school, the children are asked to write before they can write in a legible manner, to read before they can "decode," to use adult maps before they read maps etc. The children are expected to become competent by being competent. Therefore, they feel competent to be active participants in a unit about opera.

It is commonplace for children in this classroom to play with language. They create lyrics to familiar tunes, chants, riddles, rhymes and jokes. The children are also accustomed to taking a thematic refrain and turning it into other contexts. The children come to understand that some of that language play helps them bond as a community of learners. Chris Boyd provides an environment in which the children's abilities to use the

esthetic qualities of language are increased (Edelsky et al. 1991).

In whole language classrooms, children listen to quality literature (both structured and fantasy) several times a day: when the teacher reads aloud to the entire class or a small group; reading buddies read to each other; and when children listen to stories on a record player or a tape recorder (Heald-Taylor, 1989). For decades educators have asserted that reading aloud is one key experience for fostering reading development because reading to children increases oral language abilities as well as reading comprehension (Teale and Martinez 1988). Reading aloud received a strong endorsement from the Commission on Reading in Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, Hiebert Scott, Wilkinson, 1985). As Anderson et al. (1985) note, reading aloud has been shown to be the "single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading" (p.23). Children who are read to regularly will independently reread familiar books to themselves or others before they have learned to read conventionally (Teale and Martinez 1988). Anderson et al. (1985) further suggest that such reenactments both correlate with and cause high achievement in reading. Thus, Teale and Martinez (1988) suggest that teachers should foster children's emergent reading by systematically organizing repeated readings of books which are particular favorites of the class. In addition, teachers should read a book at least three times to make it likely that the children will reenact the book.

Jim Trelease (1989) suggests that reading aloud is the most effective advertisement for the pleasure or reading. For example, during an 8-week period, researchers observed a kindergarden class that had quality literature in the classroom library and whose teacher read aloud daily (Martinez and Teale, 1988). There were three kinds of library books: very familiar, familiar and unfamiliar. The researchers observed the children's' book selections during their free time. They found that the children selected the very familiar books three times as often and familiar books twice as often as the unfamiliar books. The children were more likely to imitate the teacher and "read" the very familiar and familiar books, than they were the unfamiliar books. In reading aloud, the kindergarten teacher had modeled reading and inspired the class to try to read.

According to Trelease (1989), children in the United States have demonstrated the same response to the award-winning T.V. series Reading Rainbow. In the year before it was read on the Public Broadcasting Station program, "Digging Up Dinasors" (Aliki, 1981) sold only 2,000 copies. After the program was presented it sold 25,000 copies.

Reading aloud promotes literacy development of children and converts negative attitudes to positive ones. Trelease (1989) suggests a minimum of fifteen minutes a day to read aloud in class. Since modeled behavior is such an important factor in learning, the more often a teacher or parent is observed reading

for pleasure in a meaningful way, the greater the chances of the listener modeling that behavior (Trelease 1989).

The reading department of Pittston Area Schools in Pennsylvania initiated peer learning, a PAC Readers Program. (Pittston Area Capable Readers' Program). Fifth grade student volunteers read aloud twice a week to first grade students during preschool breakfast time. The PAC-Reader introduced herself to the class and began reading aloud. The program resulted in a significant improvement in reading attitude and library circulation. Parents reported that first grade beginning readers often modeled their PAC-Readers (Trelease 1989).

The whole language strategy, "reading buddies," has been used for many years. In this strategy, an older group of children is combined with a younger class for story readings, personal dictation, and shared writing experiences. Children may read stories to each other. Older children may record personal picture stories from the younger children (Heald-Taylor 1989).

As Heald-Taylor (1989) notes, the personal dictated story is an example of a whole language strategy. It is child focused because it emerges from individual children, since the topic comes from the child's real-life experiences or from literature the child has heard or read. The story is controlled by the child author as he decides how to begin, which information to include, and when to end the story. The teacher or peer prints the story and then reads it back to the child, while pointing to each word.

When the teacher writes the story the conventions of print are modeled as the child observes complete spelling, use of standard letters, capitals, spaces between the words and punctuation. With beginning readers, children and teacher read the story in a cooperative way, allowing the child to take the lead while the teacher fades out to maintain the reader's fluency. Next, the teacher observes the child's reading strategies as he reads alone. Then, the child has the choice of illustrating the story, thus interpreting his story through art. Dictation is a holistic strategy that integrates the language processes and the arts (Heald-Taylor 1989).

The Shared Book Experience:

Holdaway (1982) developed the shared book experience (usually referred to in the United States as shared reading). Based on his natural learning research, discussed earlier, Holdaway applied the significant aspects of the bedtime story cycle to beginning reading classroom settings.

Bobbi Fisher (1991) describes the application of the shared reading strategy in her kindergarten classroom. Shared reading is the time when the teacher demonstrates the reading process and the entire class actively participates in a variety of language activities. Bobbi Fisher notes that she sits on a chair next to the teaching easel and the class sits on the floor facing her. She spends about half an hour discussing and dramatizing poems, chants, songs and big books. All these literature selections are written in enlarged print so that the children can hear the

sounds and see the letters as the teacher points to them. The focus is always on meaning, although Bobbi Fisher states that she is responsive to the specific needs of the children.

According to Bobbi Fisher (1991), big books engage emergent and beginning readers in a literature selection and enables the children to be part of a community of learners. Language activities are planned for enjoyment, meaning and integration of semantic, syntactic and grapho-phonic cueing systems. When a big book is introduced she models strategies to help the children predict what the book will be about and focuses on the title selected by the author. Next there is group sharing of prior knowledge. The book is reread until it becomes familiar and children can reenact it. As the story becomes familiar, Bobbi Fisher focuses on some of the skills and strategies in content. Then the class returns to the entire text.

Bobbi Fisher (1991) points out that masking and cloze strategies are favorite activities during shared reading time. The teacher masks words, parts of words and phrases in a familiar text. Several different masks are held up and the children volunteer to select the one that they think best for the size of the word on the chart they want to mask. The use of masking encourages children to think about the size of words. Children mask words they know, and the teacher and class confirm the response by reading the words in context. The teacher models questions to ask about words so that the children then know the kind of questions to ask their peers. The part being masked is

discovered in the context of the whole word, phrase, or sentence. Then the class goes back to the beginning of the selection to see if the word makes sense. It is the strategy of rereading part of the text.

Bobbi Fisher (1991) notes that the purpose of masking is to focus on specific details in context. As Holdaway (1979) asserts:

> It is vital that when we chose to talk about some detail in print, every eye is observing that detail at the same time as the accompanying sounds are uttered. Only then are we teaching the crucial eye-voice-ear link which makes print intelligent in the earliest stages of reading (p.26).

Drama, music and dance are included in shared reading. Bobbi Fisher states that the class acts out many stories in order to involve all the children. Sometimes the children create their own plays and puppet shows during choice time and perform for the class during sharing time.

Shared reading selections for children in kindergarten and first grade should be predictable. That is, the children can anticipate the next events in the text even before the actual test is read. Stories that are based on children's real experiences and literature selections with strong rhyme and rhythm are predictable. A familiar story structure gives children aids in predicting what will happen next (Heald-Taylor 1989). In a year long observational study of kindergarten children's activities in a classroom library, Teale and Martinez

(1988) found that children chose to interact with predictable books twice as often as they did with non-predictable books.

According to Heald-Taylor (1989), pattern writing is a natural extension of the shared reading process. In this strategy, children brainstorm for alternate vocabulary to create a new story. In one whole language kindergarten classroom (Martin and Valdon, 1988), the teacher read a predictable big book Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? (Martin, 1983). The story was read repeatedly until the children became very familiar with it. Then the children created their own big book by substituting their own name into the story. The children's words were printed on the tag board by the teachers and the children illustrated. After the book was read it was placed in the class library. This experience gave the children the opportunity to view themselves as readers, writers and illustrators.

Interacting With Books:

Interaction with books is one key in fostering reading development in young children. Children's books, written for children to enjoy are preferable to pre-primers, primers and other basal texts developed for the express purpose of reading instruction (Teale and Martinez 1988). A wide variety of trade books should be housed in the classroom library. These include fables, fairy tales, concept books, wordless books, poetry, stories and informational books (Norton, 1986).

The design of the classroom library has a significant impact on children's use of books. The library should be located in a focal area of the classroom, partitioned off from the distractions in the rest of the room. It should be large enough to accommodate several children at one time. The classroom library should be designed so it is comfortable, with carpeting, pillows and seating. There should be open-faced shelves for books, so that literature is easily accessible to children. Literature-oriented displays such as bulletin boards and posters should be incorporated in the classroom library. In addition, props including tapes related to books read and flannel boards promote children's emergent literacy (Teale and Martinez, 1988).

In Teale and Martinez's (1988) observational study of the kindergarten classroom library discussed earlier, the researchers found that one day each week the teachers gave children "assignments" when they went to the class library. For example, the children were asked to act out a repeatedly read book with flannel board characters, to read a familiar book to a peer, or practice in preparation "to read" a book to the class. The "assignments" led to an increase in the children's emergent readings.

The Reading/Writing Connection:

In whole language kindergarten and first grade classrooms, teachers have started to respond to children's early writing just as parents respond to their children's early speech. On the first day of school, children are given paper and pens and are

told that they can draw and write. Many children begin school knowing the shapes of a handful of letters. Some children know a few sound syllable correspondences. With this knowledge, children can write stories, labels and shopping lists. Children can think of themselves as writers when they have a rudimentary knowledge of print (Edelsky et al., 1991).

Hansen (1987) described a first grade class in which the teacher provided an environment for the children to read and write the first day of school. She gave the following example of a story authored by one of the children the first day.

The fire engine is red.

The fire engine was gigantic.

The fire engine went fast! (p.27)

After the story was typed for the child and illustrated by the child it was placed in the classroom library. This story became a favorite of other beginning readers in the class.

In whole language classrooms today, writing is viewed as a process. (Graves 1981) defines the writing process as "a series of operations leading to the solution of a problem. The process begins when the writer consciously or unconsciously starts a topic and is finished when the written piece is published" (p.4).

The various stages through which children progress in the writing process approach fall into five categories: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and sharing (De Carlo, 1995).

In the prewriting stage, the child is encouraged to explore by implementing many useful strategies. These include

brainstorming, reading, mapping, listening and sharing (De Carlo, 1995). In the drafting stage of writing process, children are encouraged to share their first drafts with peers or teachers who hold conferences with them. Writers revise their compositions after conferencing. Depending on the number of changes the authors wish to make, several conferences and revision sessions may take place. Next, authors edit for spelling and usage before the stories are published. Skills are fostered in the writing context (Heald-Taylor 1989).

There are different kinds of conferences discussed in the research literature. Lucy Calkins (1983) in "Lessons From a Child," describes three functions for teacher-student conferences. These conferences are planned to help writers develop the specific content of a piece, to help them reflect on the specific strategies they use for writing and for helping writers judge their own efforts. Evaluative questions were asked by Calkins so she could understand the children's perceptions of what made a writing selection good. Calkins points out that the children started asking process questions of each other.

Peer conformations are another kind of conference described. Calkins describes two types of peer conferences: formal sharing meetings and informal peer conferences which are student initiated one-on-one meetings. The children incorporated sharing and writing strategies offered during teacher child conferences to help each other.

Lucy Calkins (1980) in "The Craft of Writing" provides demonstrations of whole language writing theory. Children are depicted as actively engaged in purposeful language environments. Speaking, reading, writing, listening, thinking, problem solving and risk taking.

A whole language demonstration by the teacher, Pat Howard, is described by Calkins (1980). Howard composed in front of her students. A true experience gave her the idea for a story, and she encouraged the class to interview her until she was ready to write the initial draft. Next, she wrote her story in chalk on the blackboard, erasing and changing all aspects of the text. She spoke out loud about her reactions. The children offered suggestions they believed would clarify the story. Then they were encouraged to discuss their ideas with their peers before writing their own stories. Howard suggested that the children could try different beginnings for their stories. An editorial board of students was instituted, where the author could receive feedback. By demonstrating, indicating and questioning, Howard was responsive to the needs of the children. She discussed strengths of effective writers by examining good books.

Lucy Calkins (1986) asserts that "it is essential that children are deeply involved in writing, that they can share their texts with others, and that they perceive themselves as authors"(p.9). She further notes that children need to write and be heard. The teacher's role must be that of a listener and a coach. Calkins further states that everyone in the writing

classroom must be both a teacher and a student. Thus, the classroom becomes a learning community.

An important facet of whole language instruction is authorship (Lamme, 1989). Emergent literacy studies have shown the significance of children's attachment to favorite book authors and their sense of ownership for their own writing. As children learn to view themselves as authors, they develop an understanding of what authorship means. Writing for publication emphasizes the process of writing and considers the audience for the piece.

A key strategy of whole language teaching is the author's chair. Children come to a chair in the classroom designed as the author's chair to read their writing aloud and to discuss their thoughts with their peers. The audience suggests many ideas to help the author edit his work. Children support each other in the process of producing good writing (Lamme, 1989; Graves and Hansen, 1983).

Letter writing is a purposeful activity in a whole language classroom. When a child has read many books by the same author, and would like to tell the author how much he has enjoyed his work or asks questions about the author's work, writing is meaningful to the child (Lamme 1989). Letters can also be written to family, friends, pen pals and other members of the community. The responses the children receive from their letters provide an opportunity to further develop the understanding that

writing is communications with others (Heilman, Blair and Rupley, 1986).

In whole language classrooms, journal writing is another important strategy. Wayne Serebin (1985), a first grade teacher, describes journal writing in his whole language classroom. Pencils, pens, markers, erasers, lined and unlined note pads are available in the writing center. Children write about topics of interest to them. They are encouraged to spell words the way they think they should be spelled. The journals are never to be corrected or graded. The children have the freedom to share their writing with their peers and the teacher. Serebin writes his own journal and selects passages to read to the class. In this way he models journal writing and demonstrates that he considers journal writing meaningful.

Meredith Hutchings (1985), a first grade teacher, describes how her fundamental beliefs about writing changed and a different theoretical framework was formed. She discusses her concerns about the teacher's role with regard to the writing development of young children.

Hutchings describes in detail her use of the language experience approach in her first grade class, a few years ago. After a class trip to the post office, Hutchings wrote an experience chart with the children. The children dictated their experiences to the teacher who wrote using the children's own words, adding elements of the story in sequential order. After

the class read it together, the LEA chart was displayed in a prominent place so the children could read it.

Hutchings (1985) notes that she provided many demonstrations of what reading and writing are about. In writing the LEA chart about the post office the children's own experiences were the basis of the writing activities. The LEA chart was a copy of the children's spoken language so that print would be easier to read.

As Hutchings (1985) further states, the writing of the post office story could be considered a "first draft" approach to writing. In this approach, the first draft is the final product. Children frequently dictated stories to her. Although she assisted children in writing she did not sit down and work with them. Her demonstrations of the writing process did not vary.

After attending workshops and learning about the whole language writing theory, Hutchings (1985) plans to implement the full writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing) in her first grade classroom. She expects to learn about writing along with the children.

Current research in whole language supports the teaching of spelling in the context of the child's writing and in the context of what children are reading. Students are more likely to remember correct spelling when words are learned in a meaningful context. Young children are encouraged to invent spelling for words they have not learned to spell. Children make approximations at spelling words they need in their writing. The creation of this risk-free environment allows children's writing

to become expressive with a rich vocabulary. Teachers do not emphasize correct spelling in first drafts, so children can write freely. In whole language classrooms, children have wide experiences with print which enables them to become aware of words that do not look as if they are spelled correctly. As children see words frequently in their reading they begin to spell these words correctly. As children write and edit their compositions with practice and teacher modeling, they begin to take ownership and take care in seeing that their ideas are readable to their audience (Schnitzer, 1991).

Assessment:

Traditional methods of evaluation cannot assess whole language learning. Standardized tests are not congruent with whole language philosophy because they are skill, not process oriented. Whole language is based on modern research about language learning that suggests that children learn language through a social, participatory, thinking interactive process as they are actively engaged in rich literary experiences involving listening, reading and writing (Heald-Taylor, 1989; Gutknecht, 1992). In whole language kindergarten and first grade classrooms, teachers spend their time engaging children in discussion (either individually or in groups), facilitating children's work as well as planning and evaluating with children (Bertrand, 1991). As Kenneth Goodman (1986) says:

... one can learn much more about pupils by carefully watching them then by formal testing. Whole language teachers are

constant kid-watchers. Informally, in the course of watching a child write, listening to a group of children discuss or plan together, or having a casual conversation, teachers evaluate (p.41).

Heald-Taylor (1989) suggests several data collection formats for use in kindergarden and first grade classrooms. These formats include anecdotal records, log books, checklists, work samples (tapes of oral language, dictated stories and writing samples). Attitude inventories and whole language behavior inventories which indicate characteristics of language growth are also suggested.

Cambourne and Turbill (1990) in "Assessment in Whole-Language Classrooms: Theory into Practice" propose a natural theory of language assessment called responsive evaluation which includes observing, reacting, intervening and participating in many of the whole language activities in which children are involved on a daily basis. The authors provide several examples and guides in the article's appendices.

In a whole language classroom, kindergarten and first grade teachers make formal observations when they keep anecdotal records of the children's various activities throughout the day (Heald-Taylor 1989, Goodman, Y 1989). Some key behaviors can be noted at the top of the anecdotal record sheet which can be attached to a clipboard as the teacher works with the children (Heald-Taylor, 1989).

Learning log books are another useful formal assessment tool. These books are small folders kept by each child to document language growth. Heald-Taylor (1989) provides some examples of log book topics. These include, "What I Like about Reading; "Books I Have Read" and Reading Strategies I Use." The writing log which is stored in each child's writing folder provides evidence as to each child's writing progress (Heald-Taylor, 1989).

Checklists can be developed that are not as time consuming for the teacher to use as anecdotal records. Heald-Taylor (1989) suggests that teachers construct a checklist of the following kindergarten and first grade behaviors to be monitored:

Listening/Speaking

- Listens to Stories
- Discusses meaning of stories
- Tells and dictates stories

Reading Development

- Recognizes print symbols
- Demonstrates directionality
- Chooses nooks for self
- Emergent stage
- Beginning stage
- independent stage

Writing

- Dictates stories
- Writes first draft

symbol use (picture, scribble, letters)

Spelling (consonants, invented, conventional)

Conventions (punctuation, grammar)

Revises

Edits

Publishes (p. 145)

First grade teachers find that miscue analysis procedures provide a structure for the analysis of oral reading errors. Children use their knowledge of language, sample, predict and confirm the memory of a particular text (Lipson and Wilxson, 1991).

Valencia (1990) suggests a portfolio approach to whole language assessment. A portfolio can hold samples of a child's work selected by the teacher and the child, the teacher's observational notes, and progress notes contributed by the teacher and the child together. Items in a portfolio may include reading and writing logs, selected daily work, checklists, unit projects and audio and video tapes. Teachers and children contribute to the portfolios on an ongoing basis to reflect on the work samples to plan the next learning step.

Concluding Remarks:

There is an increasing interest in the whole language movement throughout the United States and Canada. Within the last ten years, education journals have published a great many articles about whole language (De Carlo, 1995). Kenneth Goodman

(1989) states "Whole language gives to teachers the power to make decisions and the knowledge necessary to do so."

Chapter Three will assess the needs in the field and to suggest new directions for whole language in the future. Viewpoints regarding whole language versus traditional reading and writing instruction will be summarized. The future of literary evaluation in the whole language classroom needs to be examined.

Annotated References

Fisher, B. (1991). Joyful Learning: A Whole Language Kindergarten. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This publication provides present and future early childhood teachers, whether they work in rural, suburban or inner city schools, whether they teach multicultural, bilingual, economically or disadvantaged populations with a practical guide to whole language classroom practice that links practice and theory. Fisher presents examples of planning schedules and activities to implement for emergent and beginning readers and writers.

Heald-Taylor, G. (1989). The Administrator's Guide to Whole Language. Katonah, NY: Richard Cowen.

This publication provides principals and superintendents who already have a support for whole language with an explanation of whole language philosophy that can be shared with teachers and parents; it identifies the key whole language strategies; it describes ways to assess a whole language school; it presents alternative evaluation strategies for teachers and describes practical resources and classroom materials for teachers.

Teale, W.H., and Martinez, M.G. (1988). Getting on the right road to reading: Bringing books and young children together in the classroom. Young Children. 41, 568-573.

This article discusses an approach for fostering reading development with young children. It describes the result of a year-long observational study of children's activities in a

kindergarten classroom library. Teale an. Martinez suggest daily storybook readings, extensive use of classroom libraries, a variety of trade books, and diverse activities to promote emergent reading behaviors in kindergarten children.

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Chapter Three: Needs Assessment and New Directions

Introduction:

There is gathering interest in the whole language movement. Proponents of whole language have embraced the basic principles of whole language and support classroom instruction that is holistic, meaning-focused and child-centered. However, critics and traditional assessment practices are firmly established (Harp, 1991). Many educators say that until the academic potential of the whole language classroom is more securely researched, they choose to follow a traditional curriculum that dictates what and how children learn (Martin, 1990). The entire process of literacy development is being pondered and questioned (De Carlo, 1995).

Research Needs:

Kenneth Goodman (1989) states that there is a considerable amount to be learned in whole language classrooms. Researchers have the opportunity to study various aspects of education including learning, studying, teaching, language, literary development and curriculum. The authenticity of the language transactions, and the integration of thematic units and problem solving, make it possible to study some fundamental questions. Goodman asserts that research in classrooms that implement Dewey's

concept of learning by doing, can explore the potential of this concept.

As Goodman (1989) indicates, teachers are innovating and finding creative ways of teaching and evaluating learning in their whole language classrooms. Children are learning faster and producing more than what teachers traditionally expected. Goodman asserts that researchers should find ways to document these on-going classroom activities. He further suggests that researchers can help teachers to understand the processes at work in order to expand on what is successful in their classroom practice.

Pickering (1989) points out that there are research questions to be answered relating to the effectiveness of whole language and holistic reading instruction in increasing literacy competence of children. Pickering further states that the methodology of whole language needs to be defined more clearly, with descriptions of options for teacher decision-making. The effectiveness of the options should be evaluated. Pickering predicts that on the basis of research findings about literacy competence and instruction, teachers will increase their use of literature in content areas, not only for language learning. Children will write more in all areas of the curriculum from kindergarten through high school. Rather than using a limited number of major texts, teachers will use a greater

variety of materials for reading and language arts. These will include anthologies of children's writings, periodicals, and other informational publications.

Bill Martin (1990) states that researchers should consider whether children's spontaneous trial and error judgmental responses are an assured path to cultural literacy. Researchers should study what happens to children in a classroom environment which assumes one can learn essential controls by encountering and participating in "rich conflicts" of implied meanings and self-teaching. Martin points out that studies which indicate whether whole language is a tangible curriculum designed for the long-range needs of a child during his school years would be valuable.

Zarillo (1989) states that further research is needed to determine how to develop the best literature-based program possible. Researchers can help teachers by investigating specific teaching techniques to be implemented in literature-based programs. Zarillo suggests the following topics for further study: the process of implementing a literature-based program evaluation of children's reading; children's responses to literature; and program design that is responsive to individual differences.

Frank Smith (1986) states that learners who achieve success in becoming literate in school become members of the

"literacy club." Kenneth Goodman (1989) asserts that researchers can study the validity of this concept. Also, Goodman states, it would be interesting to study whether whole language classrooms do a better job than skills-based classrooms in making more children feel like members of the "literacy club."

Goodman (1989) notes that researchers can investigate how teacher and child roles change as transitions are made from traditional to whole-language classrooms. He states that studies that indicate success of children and teachers as it relates to evidence of their empowerment would also be valuable.

Kenneth Goodman (1989) further states that research can help teachers while knowledge is developed about how creative use of materials, time, space and social transactions facilitates both learning and teaching. In this area, practice is leading research.

Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) suggest a research agenda of qualitative research on early childhood literacy learning in functional language situations. The authors advocate "the use of open, real language situations in which the child, or language user becomes the research and curriculum informant " (p.51.).

Goodman (1989) notes that researchers need to find out more about developing resources in whole language

classrooms. Although teachers use children's literature to develop reading and language learning in their classrooms, they need to know more about other materials to facilitate the development of literacy, problem solving and researching. Commercial publishers have developed whole language resource materials such as big books, predictable books and kits of trade books. According to Goodman (1989), commercial publishers are labeling materials "whole language" that appear to have little to do with the principles of whole language. Goodman further states that although many whole language teachers are competent to put together enough "real world" materials to meet the needs of their children, they also see the need for resources that do not exist, such as factual materials for use by children of various ages, abilities and language backgrounds.

Yetta Goodman (1990) states that the future of literacy research will be in the classroom since that is the setting where learning takes place. She believes that there is a need for teachers and researchers to work together to observe classroom interactions. Yetta Goodman further states that research in emergent literacy must continue. Studying children in different cultures who speak various languages will lead to increased knowledge of the ways in which young children learn literacy.

Kenneth Goodman (1989) states that classroom teachers are integrating new information into theory-based practice. When administrators and parents ask teachers for proof that whole language works, teachers can respond that the proof is in their classrooms and their learners.

The increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of children is evident in many classrooms in urban, as well as rural communities throughout the United States. Teachers are challenged to understand different values, customs and traditions and to provide multicultural experiences to teach their children effectively. There is a need for further research in this area (Baruth and Manning, 1992).

New roles for teachers:

Kenneth Goodman (1989) points out that "there are no teachers today who were themselves learners in whole-language classrooms" (p.219). Even when teachers become effective in their new roles as facilitators of learning and kidwatchers, they need the support of research. Goodman (1989) further states that research is needed on ways of supporting teachers as they make the transition from traditional to whole language classrooms. In schools where whole language has become policy, pre-service and staff development programs have been developed to provide information about whole language philosophy and practice.

As these programs are implemented, their effects need to be researched.

Pickering (1989) notes that teachers' beliefs about literacy learning and their ability to apply whole language in their classrooms will be a major factor in determining the future of whole language. Richards, Gipe and Thompson (1987) found that for teachers in the primary grades, years of teaching experience as well as the completion of graduate level courses were associated with positive attitudes toward whole language instruction. As teachers became more experienced across different grade levels and increased their knowledge about teaching reading, they became more accepting of holistic approaches.

New roles for administrators:

Heald-Taylor (1989) states that the administrator's role is cited as an important factor in determining the success of a new program. Therefore, successful implementation of whole language is facilitated by the administrator's support. Administrators need to make informed decisions about the purchase of material for the school based on knowledge of the basic differences between the traditional approach and whole language.

Zarillo (1989) states that successful literature-based programs took place in environments created by administrators who allowed teachers to design their own

reading programs. Administrators encouraged teachers to work together to develop curriculum and activities.

Whitmore and Goodman (1992) point out, "whole language teachers respect their students as learners. Whole language administrators must value teachers in the same manner" (p. 26). De Carlo (1995) notes that administrators need to realize that teachers cannot make the shift from a traditional program to a whole language immediately. Administrators must see that teachers receive professional whole language training. Administrators should also provide support and opportunities for teachers to meet and discuss the whole language program.

Roles for parents:

In "Becoming a Nation of Readers", the Commission on Reading (1985) states that, "Throughout the school years, parents continue to influence children's reading through monitoring of school performance, support for homework, and most important, continued personal involvement with their children's growth as readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson p.26). The authors suggest greater parent involvement with reading instruction.

De Carlo (1995) asserts that educators must familiarize parents with whole language by describing the methodology of whole language and explaining why it is being used to teach their children to read. Parents have shown a diversity of

attitudes regarding whole language. Some parents support whole language, and others consider change as being experimental. Others appear to have a limited interest in their children's literary development.

Pils (1991), a first grade teacher, indicates the need for parent involvement. At a fall conference with parents, she discussed the kinds of growth the children could be expected to make, and described the stages they were likely to pass through. Parents read their child's journal and booklists and listened to the tapes of their child's reading. A completed parent survey regarding the child revealed the child's interests and hobbies. Pils suggests that the teacher should emphasize what the child can do.

Assessment:

According to Harp (1991), the whole language movement is at a crossroads. He argues that "how we deal with assessment and evaluation the coming years will either confirm whole language or kill it" (p. xiii).

Recent trends appear to indicate that in the future standardized testing will expand in use (Bintz and Harste, 1991). Today, according to Valencia, Pearson, Peters and Wixson (1989), 46 of our 50 states now require state regulated testing. All 46 require testing in reading. Bintz and Harste (1991) note that standardized testing is driven by a set of assumptions about the nature of literacy

learning. The authors further state that several of these assumptions include that standardized tests are valid instruments, that outsiders not involved in learning are able to assess that learning, that standardized testing informs classroom practice, and that standardized testing measures the product of learning. Bintz and Harste (1991) believe that standardized testing is "theoretically bankrupt," given what is currently known about literacy learning (p. 226).

Bintz and Harste (1991) state that many educators are attempting to reform assessment by proposing a variety of alternatives to standardized testing. These proposals develop literacy portfolio approaches (discussed in Chapter Two), combine informal literacy portfolio data with formal standardized test data and develop holistic classroom whole language procedures. According to Valencia and Pearson (1987), over the past twenty years reading assessment has lagged behind recent advances in reading theory.

In the United States, educators have developed TETRA-2, the test of Early Reading Ability - 2. Recent advances in emergent literacy are reflected in the design of this test. Instead of focusing on skills-based criteria such as auditory discrimination or visual perception, this test attempts to engage children in natural reading and writing activities, in order to assess, for example, their ability

to recognize writing as compared to drawing (Pikulski, 1990).

In the state of Michigan, collaborative attempts by researchers, test developers, educators, policy makers, and curriculum specialists have been made to reform statewide reading assessment. These attempts are designed to provide testing throughout the state that is more consistent with current research and theory. Today, reading is defined statewide as an interactive process where readers actively construct meaning from text, not as a series of sequential and hierarchical skills (Wixson, Peters, Weber and Rober. 1987).

There is much evidence to support the belief that standardized testing has little relationship to real world reading. In fact, no data exist which support the notion that what is being tested by standardized testing has any relationship to the types of reading individuals encounter in their daily lives. Existing data suggest that standardized testing is based upon outdated assumptions about the process of reading (Cambourne, 1985).

Bintz and Harste (1991) believe that the future of literacy assessment must be driven by what is currently known about language, learning and knowledge. They believe that conversation must play a central role. Through conversation, they view assessment as a process where

learners collaborate with other learners in generating and answering their own questions. Learners can ask themselves "What have I learned?" "How did I learn it?" and "What do I now want to know more about?" Bintz and Harste further state that it is this on-going question-asking process that provides opportunities for learners to use themselves as research instruments, and to use assessment as a tool for further growth.

The Use of Computers:

The place for computers in the whole language classroom will be determined by the teachers' beliefs about learning, and instruction, not technology. When teachers plan to use computers in their reading and writing curriculum, they need to begin with their understanding of the sound research base in whole language. Teachers select software that facilitates teaching and learning (De Groff, 1990).

De Groff further states that in process writing classrooms, children learn to write by actively participating in writing whole and meaningful texts. According to Phenix and Hannon, (1984), children in first grade have succeeded at using word processors for writing imaginative stories and personal texts. Donald Graves, in an interview with Ellis (1991), states:

> The miracle of the computer is the word processing. You can change things. You get a clear visual image of

> the word. You can put space in. You can add information in the right place so you don't have to copy it.
>
> For children who have motor problems, they get a magnificent machine text. You can print multiple copies. You can go to instant publication. You can use modems for children to communicate with each other. Heavens, we don't remotely know the limits yet. It's going to rely on our professional literacy and how we use it - just like everything else (pp. 130-131).

Politics, Economics and Traditions:

Pickering (1989) notes that many school districts are committed to test-driven curriculum. The recent tendency to endorse testing which requires the mastery of skills in isolation and discrete information will make large scale implementation of whole language more difficult.

The authors of "Becoming A Nation of Readers" (Anderson, et al., 1985) proclaimed that the research literature had proven that early direct instruction of phonics is essential (Goodman 1989). According to Goodman (1989), authorative research groups find it politic to endorse simplistic phonics programs.

Goodman (1989) further states that publishers were so successful in equating science with technology, that some local and state authorities require by law that teachers

must use basal texts in dictated ways. In several states, specific published tests are mandated by law as the determining basis for program evaluation and student placement.

Whole language versus traditional reading instruction:

There appears to be a major debate concerning the efficacy of different approaches to the teaching of reading, especially between whole language and the basal reader approach. Proponents of the basal reader approach state that this approach offers a prescribed, sequential order for teaching the skills of reading. (Holland and Hall, 1980). Advocates of whole language reject the basic skills curriculum, which breaks language into such small parts that meaning is lost. Whole language teachers teach from the whole to the parts. Learning to fulfill a need is basic to whole language, and is congruent with the natural development of children (Raines and Canady, 1990). Many early childhood teachers have disliked using "reading readiness" worksheets and basal series because they treated children as passive receptors of information, rather than as actively engaged learners (Gibson, 1989).

Grindler and Stratton (1991) suggest that teachers who do not choose to totally eliminate the basal readers try an integrated approach. Aspects of whole language can be

combined with traditional approaches to be responsive to the needs of the children, or to fit the needs of the teacher.

Heymsfeld (1989) strongly advocates that it is appropriate to combine the best aspects of whole language and skills-based instruction into one approach. She asserts that while contradictions may exist initially, such contradictions may resolve themselves as educators refine their beliefs about language learning.

According to Kenneth Goodman (1989), whole language and basal skills instruction are contradictory and incompatible practices. Goodman (1989) believes that "whole language is much more than an alternative to basals." (p. 69.).

Siera and Combs (1990) state that while teachers are in transition from traditional reading instruction to holistic practice, some incompatible and contradictory elements will exist. The authors do not advocate that the strengths of whole language and basal skills be combined in one approach.

Ferguson (1988) suggests that adapting whole language requires at least five years. A teacher should begin by incorporating into his classrooms those elements of whole language practice that he supports the most. A teacher should collaborate with parents, teachers and colleagues to provide an environment that is conducive to language development.

Heald-Taylor (1989) states that teachers make the transition from traditional to whole language in various ways depending upon each teacher's style of teaching. Some teachers prefer to become totally immersed, while others prefer to make gradual increments.

Concluding remarks:

This writer has found that many school districts on Long Island are implementing holistic approaches to reading and writing instruction or using both approaches. For example, in Great Neck, a task force on whole language recommended the implementation of whole language in kindergarten through grade five. Teachers were provided with professional training. They attended whole language workshops, lectures, and university classes. Teachers are encouraged to implement whole language strategies including thematic units, shared reading with big books, personal dictation, process writing and portfolio approaches. However, the use of basal readers is mandated in first grade through fifth grade. Standardized testing is used throughout the district.

This author would like to see the implementation of whole language reading and writing in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. However, standardized testing appears to be firmly entrenched throughout the United States. School administrators need to show verifiable evidence that the

schools are teaching. It is clear that the basal reader is the favored method for teaching reading because its component skills are easily tested. Thus, whole language needs to coexist with current reading practice. New methds of assessment for whole language are needed.

Pickering (1989) discusses the significance of whole language:

> The past 30 years has been a time of experimentation and debate in literacy teaching. Advances in methods for teaching reading and writing and the increased funding for literacy instruction (Chapter I programs, e.g.) have heightened awareness for new directions in teaching reading and writing. Nonetheless, problems with literacy teaching persist. Incidence of adult illiteracy is still too high, and large segments of our society, particularity minorities, continue to be undereducated. Clearly, refined approaches to literacy teaching are needed, not just in early childhood and elementary education, but at higher levels as well. Whole language provides a promising signal that techniques and theories of literacy instruction are advancing (p. 149).

Annotated References

Bintz, W.P. and Harste, J.C. (1991). A vision for the future of assessment in whole language classrooms. In B. Harp (Ed.). Assessment and Evaluation in Whole Language Programs. (pp.219-242).

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an alternative vision for the future of assessment in whole language classrooms. Bintz and Harste provide examples of language stories that challenge several assumptions currently driving standardized testing. The current status of assessment practice is described. The authors discuss recent attempts by educators to develop a variety of alternatives to standardized testing, focusing on efforts to reform reading comprehension assessment. Bintz and Harste conclude that in the future literacy assessment must look significantly different than it does today.

De Carlo, J.E. (1995). Perspectives in Whole Language. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

This publication provides prospective and practicing teachers with a portfolio approach to whole language. Forty-eight articles about whole language from major education journals are included. The beginning of each chapter indicates background information ideas that are

related to whole language. Discussions and activities at the end of each chapter are provided.

Goodman, K.S. (1989). Whole language research foundations and development. Elementary school Journal 90, 207-221.

This article provides a summary of the whole language movement. Goodman explains the characteristics of whole language and describes what teachers and learners do in a whole language classroom. He discusses the strong research base for whole language, and asserts that appropriate research to judge whole language can examine the extent to which whole language practice is consistent with its scientific base.

Pickering, C.T. (1989). Whole language: A new signal for expanding literacy. Reading Improvement. 26, 144-149.

This article defines the meaning of the term whole language and provides a historical perspective on the whole language movement. Pickering explains that whole language instruction should involve the integration of reading and writing activities centered on the language and experiential background of the learners. Indicators of whole language in the curriculum are also

discussed. Pickering concludes with a description of the future of whole language.

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